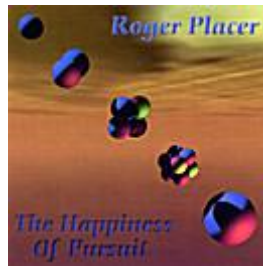


Mp3 Roger Placer - The Happiness Of Pursuit



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Guitarist and multi-instrumentalist Roger Placer crafts an album of eclectic, compelling, organic grooves in his first independent release from 1997. 15 MP3 Songs EASY LISTENING: Mood Music, ELECTRONIC: Ambient Show all album songs: The Happiness Of Pursuit Songs Details: Album Credits: Guitars, bass, keyboards, percussion, programming by Roger Placer Recorded and mixed at Chromatic Fury Recording, Oakland NJ USA, and NOT Studios III, Mahwah NJ USA Mastered by DiscMasters Track Notes: 01 Blind Angels With ringing open stringed voicings, this tune opens up the disc with a lively ride cymbal-driven backbeat. A slightly overdriven '68 Telecaster provides the melody. One of the more rock-oriented songs on Pursuit, this tune actually has lyrics, but their meaning is shrouded in mystery, so I decided to record it as an instrumental. Its origins go back to 1989; it's one of the last songs ever played by my defunct college band, Crosstalk. We played it during only one rehearsal session - the only evidence of its existence was a cassette made on a Sony Walkman with nearly dead batteries, and it's almost distorted beyond use. The song haunted me throughout the years as one that "slipped away," so I undertook a new arrangement of it, resurrecting the barely discernible parts from a copy of the crippled tape. The vocal melody was modified for better phrasing on guitar, and it just grew on its own from there. 02 Bordertown This tune came from a jam session with a trio I used to play with called Helun, although it bears little resemblance to the recorded original. Helun (drums, guitar, bass, weirdness) would get together for improvised jam sessions, and the results - some amazing, others just bizarre - were all tracked to digital multitrack and mixed to DAT tapes. The seed of Bordertown came from its bass line, which plays a less prominent role in the finished piece. The guitars are laced with gentle tremolo effects, and to me the track evokes a desolate but peaceful place on the outskirts of all the bustle, from somewhere near the border of urban craziness. 03 October Rendezvous I was staring out my window at

a glorious autumn view, complete with distant low-lying mountains. It was evening, and the sun's parting glow battled with the deepening gray and the rich color of the leaves. I had a flashback to my college days, of walking on the green between dorm and classroom on a day just like the one I was seeing, of the promise of the new academic year, of the crispness of the air as leaves fell and one's breath became visible in the cold of the waning twilight. This upbeat tune has a melancholy heart, and is underscored by a clear-toned Gibson hollowbody playing the melodic parts. Lifting synthesizer arpeggios complete the picture.

04 The Happiness Of Pursuit Unlike some title tracks which give an album its name, this one inherited its name from the album. A piece in four thematic sections, this track draws on layers of synthesizers (including guitar synth) to create lush textures and lead the listener on a brief but moving aural journey. Guitars (Fender Strat for sparkling rhythm, Gibson ES-135 for the exceptionally warm-toned solo) augment the arrangement. To me, this tune felt the most like the album's concept, as it ventured into different sonic areas, seemingly searching for itself - yet hopefully encountering some beauty along the way.

05 Divide And Conquer A punchy jazz-pop number, this tune features catchy melodic bits and a drivingly funky electric bass part. As its title suggests, it's about taking things apart, then putting them back together, stronger than ever.

06 Alive And Alone Another track from the Crosstalk days, this ambitious arrangement was concocted from the best of the old and my vision for the new. The lyrics speak about a girl and her long-lost father (who she thinks is dead, but is really imprisoned far, far away), and his appearance in her dreams - telling her to forget about him and live her life. The guitar tones in this track run the gamut, from fingerstyle bossa nova-influenced nylon string, to muted and syncopated single note playing, to singing harmonized leads.

07 Tip Of The Hat The only track on Pursuit with lots of distorted guitars, this is indeed a tip of the hat to one of my early musical influences, who shall remain nameless. Lots of suspended chords and open strings hint at the source of my inspiration. Heavily sustained Les Paul sounds dominate this track, with a groovy wah and volume pedal flavored mid-section.

08 Nocturnal Confession All of these tunes were written and recorded over many weeks or even months, but for some reason I can only remember the late nights with this one. My studio, Chromatic Fury Recording, has a single window, but the shade is usually drawn. Time stands still there, and the wee hours of the morning/night often trickle by unnoticed as I work. Freshly brewed coffee doesn't hurt, either! This track echoes the inner peace and quiet intensity that marks the most inspired sessions. Highlights include a strange but percolating solo over electric piano comping, using my goldtop

Les Paul. 09 A Shade Of Winter Although it started out as a darkly tinged quasi-dance number, this piece emerged with darkness intact but most dance-oriented components effectively squashed. A deep synth bass line propels this one, with tremolo strings atop and an introspective jazzy melody played on a Gibson hollowbody. As the title suggests, it came to fruition during cold winter nights, when the heat from countless tubes and transistors was much appreciated in my basement retreat.

10 Each Expression This final song from the Crosstalk era bristles with quiet energy, and climaxes in a cathartic outro and guitar solo. The lyrics suggest a romantic longing, the fear of losing what one cherishes, and the gradual acceptance of what must be. More ringing guitars intertwine in three parts during the verses. It's also the best sounding drum recording on the CD (IMHO), as it was completed near the end of 1996.

11 Jazz Dance This was a piece that simply refused to be coaxed into a final arrangement. For months I would play the fingerstyle jazz progression that is the foundation of the song; every time I picked up a new guitar in a shop, for example, my fingers were drawn to it.

12 Suspended Animation Perhaps the most on-the-edge fusion cut on the CD, this is also the oldest piece. Recorded in 1993, it's the only song with programmed drums - and a rather hyper drum part at that. Driven by shimmering Strat chords with a bit of vibrato, the melody is a reverb-drenched toast to '80's electric fusion. Guitar synthesizer textures enrich the background.

13 Resolution Instrumental music - be it classical, jazz, or something else - is unique in that all meaning is at once very personal to the composer, and completely open to interpretation by the listener. This song's chord structure is sweet and uplifting, yet it embodies a delicate tension that is resolved in the passages of its closing bars. My working title for it was actually "Tension," and it outlined a brief period of uncertainty in my personal relationships. As it neared completion, I realized that the direction it had taken underscored the reconciliation of the issue at hand, and it gained its final title as a result. The guitar melody is very intimate, and played with much sensitivity.

14 Winds Of History This piece was realized entirely with a Roland GR-1 guitar synthesizer, a new tool for me at the time. It also contains sampled and manipulated sounds taken from various mundane sources, also a unique approach for me. I wrote this tune after travelling to Israel in 1993, and returning with a profound sense of the vastness of time and history in that part of the world. The ethereal washes of sound that illuminate the backdrop are evocative of that sense of mystery.

15 Dawn A fitting close to the album is this piece, whose title implies just the opposite - a new beginning. Exposed, wistful, even ponderous at times, it captures the uncertainty and inevitability of a new day's dawning. Electric piano, hesitant yet insistent guitar, and a

grinding bass line are prominent in the music. A raw, mid-1970's distorted guitar solo takes it out.

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